

Executive Summary

ALAMEDA COUNTY CONGESTION MANAGEMENT AGENCY

As the local agency responsible for congestion management in the county, the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA) strategically plans, funds and implements projects and programs for highway and transit expansion, local road improvements, transit maintenance and improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. To this end, each year the CMA prepares a list of recommended congestion-reduction projects and programs for funding. In compiling this list the CMA relies on the partnership and cooperation of a number of other agencies such as:

- Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission
- California Transportation Commission
- California Department of Transportation
- Other CMAs in the region
- Every local jurisdiction and transit provider in Alameda County

The CMA is the county's transportation information and funding conduit. It is the CMA's job to make sure that tax dollars are spent wisely to improve transportation countywide. The CMA Board includes representatives from Alameda County, its cities, AC Transit and BART. Technical expertise is provided by staff from these and other local and regional transportation agencies.

One of the CMA's primary responsibilities is to develop and periodically update the *Countywide Transportation Plan*, a long-range policy document that guides transportation decisions and articulates the vision for Alameda County's transportation system. Through goals, objectives and strategies, the Plan lays the groundwork for an investment program tailored to the diverse needs of the county's residents, visitors and workers.

Through the funding allocation program, the Plan seeks to ensure that transportation investments—over the 25-year planning period—are efficient and productive, and that maintenance and management of the system remains a high

**Our goal is to
continue to chart
the future
boldly—while
committing
resources wisely.**

priority. Transportation projects competing for state or federal funds must be consistent with this Plan, as well as with the long-range plan of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

A SNAPSHOT OF ALAMEDA COUNTY

Transportation is vital to Alameda County—the geographic center of the nine-county Bay Area—and its economy. The county is a global gateway for international trade. Its freeways are the principal trucking routes that connect the Bay Area with its economic hinterland. Oakland, the county's predominant city, is the hub of the BART system. The Port of Oakland is one of the four busiest ports on the West Coast and a primary gateway for the transcontinental railroad system. Extending from the region's urban core to its rural periphery, the county incorporates land uses that range from intensely urban to suburban and rural.

The Countywide Transportation System

The Countywide Transportation System includes all freeways in Alameda County; a selected network of roads and major arterials that provide the primary avenues of local circulation; the bridges that connect Alameda County with San Francisco and the West Bay; the metropolitan gateways that connect Alameda County with Contra Costa County and the Central Valley; the county's global gateways, including Oakland International Airport, the Port of Oakland and the railroads and intermodal terminals which serve it; BART, AC Transit, LAVTA, Union City Transit and those major hubs and transfer centers where the transit system of the future will connect with interregional rail service and the freeway system.

It is the CMA's charge to bring all these elements together in a shared vision.

Congestion Increasing

Congestion becomes a transportation problem when it compromises our mobility, the degree to which we can readily travel from place to place. In Alameda County, congestion has increased significantly, yet it has not compromised our capability for movement.

Overall level of service for arterials and freeway has improved between 1994 and 2002, while average speed has remained the same, with improvements in some areas and deterioration in others. Vehicle hours of delay on freeways—the combined amount of time cars and trucks spent idling—has decreased slightly with 61,700 vehicle hours of delay in 2000 and 61,300 in 2002. This is a significant change in trends from previous years when it jumped from 25,600 in 1995 to 44,300 in 1999¹. Average commute time has increased by five minutes over the past decade, from 25 minutes in 1990 to 30 minutes in 2000. The average commute length has reduced from 17 miles to 16 miles (one way) miles to from 2000 to 2003².

¹ California Department of Transportation, District 4, Information Memo Year 2002, Bay Area Congestion Data.

² RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, Inc. Commute Profile 2003, A Survey of San Francisco Bay Area Commute Patterns.

Demographics and travel patterns in 2000 are similar to those in the 1990s with the exception of the rise, then dip in the economy in the late 1990s. There was an increasing population, an increasing workforce, a significant increase in the cost of housing, and increasing auto ownership. This was accompanied by growth in the share of workers commuting to suburban employment centers as well as a significant increase in the number of workers who use transit to commute to the urban core. Trucking and goods movement continues to be an around-the-clock industry—reducing but not eliminating the conflict between commute traffic and freight movement.

Although congestion has increased, it has not impaired urban mobility or job access significantly because:

- Suburban employment growth has brought jobs closer to housing;
- Carpools and high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes act as mass transit for long-distance commuters;
- Mass transit provides a quality alternative for those who work in the urban core; and
- The personal computer and telecommunications revolutions enable more people to work at home.

10 Most Critical Transportation Choices for Alameda County

To address the increasing congestion are 10 critical transportation choices continuing to face Alameda County. These choices can be characterized as strategic ones because their outcomes will determine how well the countywide transportation system works and how effectively it can serve the needs of future generations.

1. How much funding should be guaranteed to operate and maintain existing facilities and services versus that committed to capital investment in new facilities?
2. Should the CMA's investment program emphasize transit improvement or highway improvement? Or should it emphasize street, highway and transit improvements where each is most appropriate?
3. Should transit improvement emphasize the improvement of existing bus service and expanded services that emulate rail and/or electric trolley service in the county where feasible? Or should it emphasize the development of long-distance rail and bus service?
4. How can the service provided by BART, buses, light rail and interregional rail be coordinated most effectively and expanded most efficiently?
5. How can the freeway system be operated more efficiently without burdening major local roads with additional congestion and heavy traffic? What are the respective roles of ramp metering and HOV lanes in the county's primary freeway corridors?
6. How can transportation investment decisions be coupled more effectively with planning for economic growth and community development?

7. How can the movement of passengers and freight be reconciled most effectively? What investments are specifically needed for efficient goods movement?
8. What pricing measures would be most productive in improving air quality and reducing congestion—and which of these would be most acceptable to the public?
9. How much additional revenue is necessary to meet the county's transportation needs and how much are its residents prepared to pay?
10. What revenue contribution should be sought from fuel taxes, sales taxes, bridge and highway tolls and development impact fees?

A VISION OF OUR FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

A transportation plan must map the future with broad, bold strokes, but it must temper investment opportunities with financial realities. Without a bold vision, transportation will not attract the investment it requires to serve the needs of present and future generations. Without a disciplined investment strategy, resources will be wasted and additional funding denied. The CMA's vision of future transportation needs is based on five fundamental principles.

- We should leave the next generation with a transportation system that creates economic opportunities, not economic burdens. We must not leave a legacy of poorly maintained facilities, underfunded services and unsettled debts.
- Alameda County is racially, ethnically, socially, economically and geographically diverse. The mix of transportation improvements should reflect the diversity of our population and the geographic diversity of our communities.
- The transportation system must be designed to accommodate future growth so the next generation will have the job opportunities, the employment choices and the housing options they deserve.
- Transportation plans must recognize that both suburban development and urban redevelopment will be necessary to accommodate the level of population and employment growth projected for Alameda County, and to provide the next generation with choices of where to live and work.
- As part of our responsibility to future generations, we must ensure that transportation improvements are coupled with a commitment to conserve resources and preserve Alameda County's environment.

Meeting the diverse transportation needs of the county poses four challenges for transportation planning.

- To articulate the vision of a transportation system that will meet our present needs and those of future generations.

- To make the strategic choices necessary to achieve the vision and lay the groundwork for a long-range investment program, including specific investments that are most immediately necessary to enhance the county's quality of life, its prospects for economic growth and its standing in the global economy.
- To identify and secure enough funds to implement the Plan.
- To establish policy guidelines for maintaining, pricing and operating the transportation system—including its coordination with land use planning—in order to ensure that investment in the system results in efficient and productive operation.

OUR GOALS AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Our desired outcome is a balanced transportation system with modern and well-maintained facilities—a system that:

- Provides safe and convenient access to jobs and services;
- Ensures the efficient movement of freight; and
- Contributes to the conservation of natural resources and the preservation of our environmental heritage for the use of future generations.

To assist in monitoring the Plan's effectiveness, the CMA has established six goals and accompanying objectives.

Improve Mobility

Congestion is a fact of life in metropolitan areas around the world. We cannot and should not expect to build a transportation system that will banish congestion. Nor should we try to "price" congestion off the system. But we should employ pricing and investment to reduce and limit congestion—thus improving or sustaining mobility.

Increase Transit Access and Transit Use

Transit access is essential for the economic health of the urban core and for the mobility of those who are unable to afford or use an automobile. Increased use of shared transportation, including transit, vanpools and carpools, is necessary to conserve energy, relieve congestion and improve air quality.

Improve Air Quality

Cars and trucks are a primary source of pollution in the Bay Area. Automotive-emissions control and the gradual replacement of old cars that lack state-of-the-art controls have made a significant contribution to clean air. Continuing progress toward clean air will require continuing technological improvement. But

given the rate at which our population will grow, we will also need to reduce the number of trips we make by automobile in order to maintain clean air.

Enhance Economic Vitality

Alameda County is a global gateway for freight movement and a center for warehousing and distribution. Trucking plays a larger role in our economy than that of any other Bay Area county.

Enhance Operational Efficiency

Maintenance and operations are the day-to-day backbone of an economical and reliable transportation system. Transit service depends on efficient operations, while maintenance and rehabilitation are essential for the longevity of local roads and transit facilities. Demand for use of the freeway and arterial system is greater than existing facilities can accommodate. In many parts of the county, increasing capacity by widening roadways may not be possible because of geographical limitations and/or lack of funding. We need to increase capacity by using our existing system more efficiently—making the most of what we have.

Coordinate Transportation and Land Use Planning

Highway investment can support orderly growth and development—or generate speculative pressures that disrupt orderly development. Rail transit can provide an efficient way to move large passenger volumes—or it can prove a costly way to move a small number of people. In each case, a positive outcome hinges on an effective, cooperative approach to coordinating transportation and land use planning.

A DIVERSIFIED STRATEGY

The state's fiscal emergency led to greater competition for already scarce funds, delay in much needed congestion-relief projects and a general sense of uncertainty for future transportation projects. The money currently available to us for transportation—or lack thereof—will not allow Alameda County to create the ideal transportation system. There is a particularly wide gap between what we have and what we need for transit operations, street maintenance and major new capital improvements.

We can conserve resources by estimating the cost of projects conservatively; we can manage demand through pricing, land use management or metered highway operation; or we can seek additional revenues to finance additional investment. We can reconcile limited resources and critical needs by making strategic choices about the investments we need most, the investments we can afford and how to make up the difference.

Available funding and projects currently slated for funding will not be enough to maintain the present level of mobility in Alameda County. The quality of transportation service will worsen unless Alameda County pursues a broader range of strategies. A diversified strategy is appropriate for Alameda County

because it is more cost-effective than investment alone, and because it can be tailored to fit the conditions and circumstances found in each part of the county. This strategy consists of seven elements:

- An investment program with the flexibility to finance street, highway and mass transit projects—where it offers the most cost-effective method of transportation improvement.
- A commitment to funding the highest priority projects in the county, including improvements that address the most congested corridors.
- Strategies designed to ensure enough funding for the maintenance, operation and operational improvement of existing facilities and services.
- Strategies designed to ensure efficient operation of those facilities that are essential for freight movement.
- Cooperative planning designed to engage city, county, CMA and state authorities in planning for corridor/area traffic management.
- Planning guidelines designed to ensure strategic treatment of hubs, gateways and intermodal terminals.
- Pricing policies designed to improve efficiency of the existing transportation system and reconcile mobility and air quality.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The countywide transportation system is a system of multiple transportation modes, managed by multiple agencies. Planning, investment and operation must be done cooperatively among these agencies for the system to function efficiently despite increasing population and employment. Better coordination between transportation and land use planning is needed to ensure that the county's growth can be accommodated without harming the environment. Pricing policies are needed to improve efficiency of the existing transportation infrastructure, reduce congestion and accelerate progress toward clean air.

The strategy of system management is organized into three parts: funding policies, planning guidelines and pricing policies and other incentives.

Funding Policies

Funding policies are intended to ensure that enough money is dedicated to the maintenance, operation and operational improvement of existing facilities and services. They are also intended to ensure efficient operation of those facilities and services that are most essential for the movement of freight.

With the aging of our transportation infrastructure comes a greater need to spend money on fixing these facilities. For this reason, the Plan gives strategic priority to maintaining the existing system. Because

freight transportation makes such an important contribution to the county's economy, it is both necessary and appropriate that the Plan also give strategic priority to the movement of freight.

Planning Guidelines

Planning guidelines are designed to:

- Strengthen the connection between transportation and land use, including policies and criteria to define transit-oriented development;
- Ensure that designated "hubs," where transportation services connect and "gateways," which act as points of entry from other geographic areas, are approached strategically;
- Encourage city, county, regional and state authorities to cooperatively manage traffic in identified corridors or areas through corridor/area management planning; and
- Develop a countywide Park-and-Ride Facility Plan that includes the location, cost and funding priority for park-and-ride lots. The Plan shall consider opportunities for promoting express transit service where appropriate.

Pricing Policies and Other Incentives

Pricing policies and other incentives are intended to preserve our ability to travel while protecting the quality of the air we breathe. Pricing policies include conservation pricing and lane pricing. As a first step toward a gentle form of conservation pricing, the CMA endorses gradual increases in the fuel tax—with emphasis on a combination of fuel taxes and fuel sales taxes which have the flexibility to be used for transit improvement and local street and road maintenance. The CMA also endorses continued study of pricing mechanisms such as high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes in Alameda County. If proven feasible, revenues generated by HOT lanes would remain in the HOT lane corridor and would be used to operate the facility, augment transit service and fund capital improvements.

The CMA promotes other incentives to best manage congestion. These include:

- Endorsing the development of regional or statewide policies which provide tax benefits for workers who use alternative modes to commute and provide financial incentives for the use of alternative transportation for commuting to work, tax benefits for workers who share rides and use public or non-motorized transportation;
- Creating financial incentives to use an alternative form of transportation to work; and
- Encouraging the development of home-based telecommuting programs in the public and private sector.

REVENUE

The diverse transportation needs in the county require flexible funding sources that allow transportation improvements and services to be tailored to local requirements.

How Funding is Limited

Revenue collections have not kept pace with county population growth because of the California recessions in the 1990s and early 2000 and because the state gasoline tax had not been adjusted to account for the impacts of inflation. Revenue flexibility continues to be a problem because so many revenue sources can only be used for capital investment purposes. It is far easier to obtain funding to build a road than it is to maintain it, and for transit it is easier to buy a bus than it is to obtain the funds to operate it.

The lack of funding for maintenance and transit operation is, to a large degree, dictated by the types of, and limitations on, funding sources. Some funding sources are specific for highways or for transit capital projects. Restrictions on fund sources can lead to investment decisions based on funding source requirements and availability rather than on need.

A New Approach

The CMA historically programmed funds through a formula based on population; funds were divided among four geographically defined planning areas. With this update, the CMA chose to embark on a new approach—to focus a significant amount of funding on high priority projects in Tier 1. Tier 1 can only contain projects that can fit into the total amount of funding the CMA expects to be available from federal, state and local sources over the next 25 years. High priority projects are those projects that provide congestion relief, improve mobility and/or connectivity that extend beyond a single area.

Other high priority projects were selected to complete the funding package for improvements identified in the *Measure B Expenditure Plan*. These projects also address the most congested corridors in Alameda County.

The population-based formula was applied to remaining funds after funding for the high priority projects was identified.

Potential Funding Sources

Although severely reduced from years past, a variety of revenues and funding sources are available to finance transportation improvement in Alameda County. These may be available for both ongoing and new projects and programs.

- Federal Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)
- Reauthorization of TEA-21

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- State gas tax subventions to local government
- State Transportation Development Act/State Transit Assistance revenues
- State Transportation Improvement Program funds
- State Environmental Enhancements and Mitigation
- State Transportation Development Act, Article 3, Bicycle and Pedestrian
- State Traffic Congestion Relief Program for specifically identified projects
- Bridge Toll Revenues
- Regional Measure 2, bridge toll revenues for specific projects and programs
- Measure B Half-Cent Sales Tax Program
- AB 1107 half-cent sales tax revenues for transit (BART and AC Transit)
- Vehicle registration fees for clean air programs, called the Transportation Fund for Clean Air, in the Bay Area
- Local fees paid by developers to reduce the negative impacts of their developments on traffic

Because the amount of funding is tied to economic conditions, the total amount of funds available for future programming can be uncertain. Under such conditions, the CMA will have to determine the best strategy to establish additional revenue mechanisms. Each source presents a series of challenges and opportunities. The CMA must assess which sources are most viable given the national, state and regional economy and possible need for voter approval.

How Much Do We Expect?

The MTC is currently updating their regional transportation plan. Entitled, *Transportation 2030*, this plan is MTC's long-range planning document that covers a 25-year period (from 2005 to 2030). MTC estimates that \$108.5 billion will be available for the region over the 25-year period. Of this amount:

- Approximately \$99.7 billion is committed to the existing system; and
- Approximately \$8.8 billion is available for new investment.

COMMITMENT TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM

As shown in Table 5.1, revenue sources at all levels of government are dedicated to operating and maintaining the existing transportation system. Managing the county transportation system requires an increasing financial commitment that, at a minimum, ensures its safety, reliability and existing service levels. If maintenance is deferred, the result is a substantial and increasing maintenance backlog. The

commitment to these projects and programs are made prior to determining how funds should be allocated to “new” projects.

REVENUES AVAILABLE FOR NEW INVESTMENT

Of the \$8.8 billion available for new investment, approximately two-thirds are available to the CMAAs in the nine Bay Area counties, including responsibility for transit and road maintenance. MTC identified about \$1.31 billion in available revenues for Alameda County Tier 1 projects for the 25-year period (discussed in detail in Chapter 6).

In addition to money programmed through *Transportation 2030*, the county also expects to receive funding from Measure B³, RM 2⁴ revenue over the next 30 years, Transportation Development Act Bicycle and Pedestrian Funds, Transportation Congestion Relief Program funds, State Interregional Transportation Improvement Program funds, and a share of New Starts funding.

In Alameda County, \$664.4 is committed to addressing transit capital shortfalls and MTS pavement maintenance obligations, leaving \$645.6 for other projects and programs.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Investment Policies

The CMA capital investment policies recognize a responsibility to future generations while taking a combination of other steps necessary to:

- Maintain and operate existing facilities before diverting funds to build new facilities.
- Ensure that no individual project is so costly that it compromises improving the system as a whole.
- Ensure that regional gateways are safely operated in a manner which manages traffic flow and, where appropriate, gives priority to the movement of carpools, buses and commercial vehicles.
- Give priority to those projects that are most effectively coordinated with land use planning.

³ To add to state and federal dollars, Alameda County voters recognized the importance of providing a local contribution to transportation improvements. In 2000, voters approved Measure B, which continued the half-cent sales tax on gasoline. Funds generated by Measure B will be used in combination with County Share funds shown in Tier 1, as well as for other projects.

⁴ RM 2, approved by Bay Area Voters in March 2004, increased the tolls on Bay Area bridges by \$1.00. The revenues are dedicated for specific capital projects and operating funds for selected transit operators.

- Secure additional funding for a capital investment program that meets priority needs as economically as possible.
- Focus on high priority projects over the next several state and federal funding cycles to ensure delivery of these improvements.

Capital Investment Program

The capital investment program serves as the basis for Alameda County's recommendation for the 2005 regional transportation plan, *Transportation 2030*. The investments are presented in five parts.

COMMITTED PROJECTS

Table 6.1 lists the Committed Projects for Alameda County. These are projects for which full funding has already been identified (from state or federal transportation funds, Measure B and local funds), but construction is not yet completed. They represent the first level of committed investment in the transportation network over the 25-year span of MTC's *Transportation 2030* and the CMA's *2004 Countywide Transportation Plan*. The total commitment to these projects is approximately \$1.92 billion.

TIER 1 INVESTMENTS

Tier 1 projects and services represent the next level of investment in the county's transportation system. Tier 1 is based on what the CMA reasonably expects to receive from STP/CMAQ/STIP funding between 2001 and 2026. This combination of funding totals about \$1.31 billion. Tier 1 does not include guaranteed funds that are "set aside" for MTC's regional programs, such as the regional rideshare program or the Transportation for Livable Communities program.

Tier 1 includes partial funding for the shortfall in transit maintenance and capital replacement. It also includes only partial funding for local road pavement maintenance shortfalls and no funding for non-pavement needs such as sidewalks, lighting and drainage. This backlog will have to be addressed through future revenues or by local government. The estimated cost of funding this backlog is \$831.7 million over the 25 year planning period.

REGIONAL MEASURE 2 CAPITAL PROJECTS

RM 2, approved by Bay Area voters in March 2004, increased the tolls on State-owned bridges to \$3. The legislation is expected to generate \$3 billion over 35 years. The capital projects are all included in Tier 1 Investments. Funding from future federal and state fund sources, together with Regional Measure 2 funds and Measure B funds, completes the funding package.

BIG TENT PROJECTS

As noted in Chapter 5, MTC will develop a “Big Tent” Alternative as part of the regional transportation plan, *Transportation 2030*. This alternative is based on new revenues that could become available from new sources such as a regional gas tax, increase in the state or federal fuel tax or extension of the transportation half-cent sales tax. The CMA’s Plan includes candidate projects (shown in Table 6.4) for inclusion in the Big Tent Alternative should new funding sources become available.

REGIONAL TRANSIT EXPANSION PROGRAM

MTC approved Resolution 3357 on April 25, 2001 to establish a policy and criterion for expanding the regional transit system. The criterion focuses on improving mobility in the most congested travel corridors and providing additional transit options for commute travel. A follow-up resolution, Resolution 3434, identified a list of projects that met the transit expansion criteria.

Relationship of Investment Program to Countywide Transportation Plan Goals

The goals for the 2004 *Countywide Transportation Plan* are discussed in Chapter 1. The CMA has proposed a capital investment program that mirrors its adopted policies and demonstrates a commitment to transit, to reducing congestion and pollution and to maintaining and enhancing the existing transportation network. An analysis of the CMA’s investment choices shows that approximately 73 percent of the expected revenues have been set aside for this effort.

Summary of Investment Policies

The CMA will use the following policies to address funding the Tier 1 investments.

- The CMA will consider substituting of funds on a case-by-case basis among STIP County Share and STP/CMAQ funds to give maximum flexibility.
- Resources will be focused on high priority projects identified in Tier 1 over the next several state and federal funding cycles to ensure delivery of these projects. High priority projects are those projects that provide congestion relief, improve mobility and/or connectivity that extend beyond a single area.
- Request designation of corridor status combining corridor improvements. Corridor status allows the CMA to pool funding programmed in a corridor and provides flexibility to move funding between various phases of corridor improvements.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The CMA will use performance measures to monitor and evaluate the success of the Plan. Monitoring and evaluation are critically important to the success of strategic planning. They are necessary to:

- Ensure that the Plan is implemented;
- Track the performance of the transportation system over time;
- Assess the results of investment and expenditure programs;
- Ensure that the Plan is producing the expected cost-effective results;
- Learn more about “what’s working” and “what’s not” and under what circumstances;
- Inform needed adjustments in the Plan or the CMA’s funding strategy; and
- Ensure that policy mandates produce administration follow-through.

The CMA will use a variety of indicators to track performance of the transportation system over time. They include:

- Average highway speeds
- Travel time for transit, highways and HOV lanes
- Duration of traffic congestion
- Roadway maintenance
- Roadway accidents on freeways
- Completion of the countywide bike plan
- Transit routing
- Transit frequency
- Coordination of transit service
- Transit ridership
- Transit vehicle maintenance

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

A number of implementation issues may emerge requiring further action by the CMA or requiring legislative action. The issues are divided into three categories:

- Short-term issues, which should be resolved during fiscal years 2004-2006;
- Long-term issues, which will be considered during the 2006 update of this Plan; and
- Ongoing issues, which have no time limitation.